A GOTHIC STORY.

THE

CASTLES

OF

Montreuil and Barre;

OR THE

HISTORIES

OF THE

Marquis Le BRUN, and the Baron La MARCHE,

THE LATE

Inhabitants and Proprietors

OF THE

TWO CASTLES.

Liverpool:

PRINTED BY AND FOR

T. SCHOFIELD,

And Sold at his Shop...NO. 168...Dale-Street.

price—six-pence.

RB. 23 a 6841

THE

CASTLES

OF

MONTREUIL AND *BARRE.*

Taken from the Lady's Magazine.

THE night was dark and cold—while the wind, howling in diſmal blaſts, threatened almoſt inſtant demolition to the already half-decayed cottage of Pierre la Motte; who, with his wife Jaqueline, had been prevented from retiring to reſt by the increaſing violence of the Tempeſt. Twice had they repleniſhed the blazing hearth ſince their uſual hour of repoſe; yet ſtill the fury of the ſtorm ſeemed unabated. The oldeſt of the inhabitants in that provence could not remember ſuch a hurricane. All the elements ſeemed in contention; while the awful peals of thunder, and vivid flaſhes of lightning at that unuſual ſeaſon (for it was the end of November), filled the ſpectators with dread.

"Goodneſs a'mercy! (cried Jaqueline) how can that dear girl ſleep amidſt all this noiſe? I am ſure it is enough to wake the dead. *Mon Dieu!* how I tremble!"

"Indeed, it is very uncomfortable (replied Pierre, with a ſhrug); but if you, Jaqueline, would draw a freſh jug of beer, and bring me a clean pipe, it would make the time paſs more pleaſantly, ſince you will not come to bed; beſides, then I can talk with you about Ella."

Jaqueline took the jug, and was juſt quitting the room, when a ſhrill ſcream reverberated round the cottage. The report of a piſtol was heard, ſucceeded by a groan, and again all was huſhed in ſilence. The affrighted woman caught faſt hold of her huſband for protection; while he, more active in the cauſe of humanity, ſnatched down a fuſee which was

ſuſpended acroſs the chimney; and, ſeizing the candle in the other hand, ſallied forth, in zealous deſpite of the remonſtrances and intreaties of Jaqueline, who remained, overpowered by foreboding fears, within the door of their humble manſion.

The rain ſoon extinguiſhed his feeble taper, and the total darkneſs that prevailed added to the horror of the moment. Uncertain whither to direct his ſteps, he reſted ſome minutes, to catch any ſound which might give more certainty; and heard between the paſſing guſts of wind the voices of people plaintively converſing. A faint glimmering through the trees directed his courſe, and he ſoon gained ſight of the object he was in ſearch of.

By the light of an almoſt extinguiſhed torch which lay on the ground, he perceived two youths, of pleaſing and uncommon figure, ſeated on the turf: the long flowing treſſes of him who appeared to be the youngeſt, were drenched in rain, as were alſo his diſordered garments; and an expreſſion of horror and diſtreſs was depictured on his countenance, as he vainly endeavoured to ſtaunch the blood, which was flowing in copious ſtreams from a wound in the ſide of his companion whom he was ſupporting.

Pierre approached, and, in a ſubmiſſive but benignant manner, tendered his aſſiſtance, which was accepted by the youthful ſtranger with evident gratitude. Between them they raiſed the wounded man from the wet earth. He was quite inſenſible through pain and loſs of blood, added to the intenſe coldneſs of the night. With care they conveyed him to the cottage; where Jaqueline, recovered from her inanity, at ſight of her huſband in ſafety, buſied herſelf in preparing for the accommodation of their unfortunate gueſt. Ella was ſummoned, and aſſiſted with alacrity in preparing their beſt bed for the ſtranger; into which he was put, after Jaqueline had, with linen bandages, prevented the effuſion of blood, which threatened to render all their care futile.

Leaving the afflicted youth his companion to watch beſide him, Pierre fetched his horſe from the ſtable; and, it being then day-break, ſet off for S****, the neareſt town, for a ſurgeon. Fortunately, he procured a man of great eminence in the profeſſion; who, after extracting the ball, declared the wound to be very trivial. Ella was vigilant in her attention, and ſhared with Edgar (the other ſtranger) in the taſk of watching their invalid.

Owing to their unremitting attention, in the courſe of a week the ſtranger was ſufficiently recovered to aſſociate with

the family at breakfaſt. He thanked them all, in the moſt graceful and elegant manner; and, caſting his eyes with an expreſſive glance toward the embarraſſed Ella, intreated her further friendſhip for his ſiſter Margaretta.

All eyes were immediately directed, with aſtoniſhment, to the youth who had before appeared ſo intereſting. His confuſion explained the myſtery; and Ella, preſſing the hand extended to her, confeſſed, in an arch manner, the danger ſhe felt ſhe ſhould have been in had the ſex of their gueſt remained much longer a ſecret. They all ſmiled at this ſally, and the eyes of the ſtrangers were more forcibly attracted toward the author of it.

The figure of Ella (although ſhe had not yet attained her complete ſtature) was far from contemptible; and the plain ſimplicity of her habit precluding all aid from ornament, ſerved only to make her native lovelineſs ſhine more conſpicuous. Her complexion was peculiarly fair, and adorned with the glow of health and innocence. Her eyes, of bright azure, occaſionally gliſtened with the penſive tear of ſenſibility, or ſported with the effuſions of artleſs vivacity, each equally enchanting. Her fine hair, of a pale auburn, curled lightly over her forehead, and deſcended her back, looſe and unconfined, in wild luxuriance, diſplaying to advantage her well-turned neck and ſhoulders, and added charms to youth and beauty.

After gazing at her for ſome time in pleaſing aſtoniſhment, the ſtranger whoſe name was Edmund, thus addreſſed Pierre:

"It may be neceſſary, my good friend (ſaid he), to acquaint you with the cauſe of this diſguiſe, which may otherwiſe tend to give you a very unfavourable opinion of me. As the tale is long, and as I wiſh at preſent to conſult you upon more material buſineſs, I will briefly ſtate, that we were born and educated in Scotland, and are deſcended from a noble family. An unfortunate affair of honor has compelled me to become an exile. My ſiſter, ever the partner of my ſorrows, would not deſert me at this period; and has, under this diſguiſe, conſented to ſhare my fate. It was my intention to repair to Bologna. Paſſing through this foreſt on our way thither we loſt our road, and have reaſon to believe our guide betrayed us; for he diſappeared ſoon after our entrance into it. Some banditti ruſhed upon us, and one of them diſcharged the contents of his piece in my ſide. I have, however, reaſon to believe the wound I received was not from the hand of a common robber, particularly as our property remains untouched."

They all concurred in this opinion. He proceeded:

"It is my wish to fix my residence in some retired part of France. My fortune at present is not inconsiderable. I should prefer a *chateau* somewhere in the vicinity of this spot, if such a one could be found uninhabited, where we might sometimes hope for the society of yourself and amiable family, to divert the solitude to which we must unavoidably consign ourselves

Pierre, elated with the idea of the honor about to be conferred upon him, began to sit very uneasy upon his seat. Jaqueline looked, as she felt, quite entranced; and Ella, who had sat with her eyes fixed on the elegant speaker, withdrew them in confusion, as he rivetted his on her at the end of his address.

For some time they were all silent, till Edmund, repeating his question, "Whether he knew of any?" recalled the wandering senses of Pierre, who replied, in some trepidation—

"Why yes, *mi lor* (for in Pierre's imagination he was already titled)—it is very odd—very fortunate, I mean. I know of a very beautiful castle. To be sure, it is rather old—*mais n'importe!* you may live in it for nothing, and be thanked too—but then——"

Here he seemed either unable or unwilling to proceed. Jaqueline, however, helped him out, exclaiming, with an energy that started them—

"*Ciel!* what are you talking of? Do you think madame Margaretta would live in such a place?—Why it is haunted!"

Pierre seemed vexed and disconcerted.

"Why, *vraiment!* (replied he), there are strange things told about this same castle—*Mais pour moi*, I don't believe them all; but, if you please, *mi lor* (addressing Edmund, I will tell you the legend of this castle, and of another connected with it."

"I will thank you, if you would first let me have a view of it (replied Edmund,) as perhaps your trouble may not be necessary."

Pierre assenting, he took his arm, and together they quitted the cottage. In about an hour they returned.

Edmund was evidently satisfied, but said nothing till they sat down to dinner. He then turned to his sister:

"My dear Margaretta, I have almost decided upon the affair. You shall see the castle yourself; and I think, unless you have more weakness in you than I suspect, you will not object to my plan."

"I fear (replied she, smiling) if you allude to the haunted castle, you will find me a mere woman. One only arrange-

ment could induce me to risk being carried off in the night by some supernatural agent; but of this another time. I am now ready to accompany you, only requesting the arm of my young friend Ella."

They then quitted the cot, escorted by Edmund and la Motte. As they proceeded, Pierre pointed out to them the beauties of the surrounding objects.

"Our cottage, madame (said he to Margaretta), which you have so much honoured with your presence, is, as you may perceive, situated in a valley. Turn your eyes to the right: on that eminence you behold the magnificent castle du Barré, the owners of which are more renowned for their military atchievements than for their domestic virtues. Of them you shall hear further presently."

They were now ascending a steep acclivity, which led them to a venerable pile of building, situated on the top, called the castle de Montreuil, and the one to which they were repairing. The height of the ascent obliged them to halt several times; and Pierre, leaving them to the care of Edmund, hasted forward to open the gates. They at length attained the summit, and were welcomed into the castle.

This building, like most of that age, was a large dreary Gothic pile, heavily and irregularly built; the massive gates, tesselated pavement, and high casements, struck a pleasing awe on the mind of Margaretta, who was a child of romance; and she gazed around in silent admiration.

Fatigued with their walk, they seated themselves round a spacious oak table, in a place which had in ancient times been the servants hall; and, at Edmund's request, Pierre began to relate the story he had heard respecting this ancient building. They listened in dreadful expectation, and he thus began:

"This castle (said Pierre) was the paternal estate of the Marquis le Brun, and had been for many centuries the family residence of his ancestors. I had the honour to serve him in my youth, and have cause to remember with gratitude his goodness to me; for to him am I indebted for all the education I ever received. He was at one time high in favour with his sovereign. The distinguished marks of attention which he received from the late Louis served but to raise innumerable enemies among the courtiers. The most powerful of his competitors was the Baron la Marche, who, from having served his country in some successful campaigns, could ill brook a rival in his monarch's esteem.

"However the baron might be entitled to pre-eminence as a warrior, his private character ill merited competition with the marquis. Proud, arrogant, and unfeeling, he was deteſted by his vaſſals; while my maſter, by his benevolence and amiable manners, attracted the love of all who knew him. Diſguſted at length with the intrigues of the court, he abruptly retired from it, and dedicated the remnant of his days to the education of his only ſon Edgar, in whoſe dawning mind he implanted the ſeeds of thoſe virtues for which he had himſelf been ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed. The tranquillity he had promiſed himſelf was, however, ſoon diſturbed; for the Baron, as if determined to purſue him with his hatred, retired to his caſtle, which had for many years remained unoccupied (the ſame which I before pointed out to you), where he endeavoured, by innumerable malicious acts, to irritate the marquis to open rupture. This not having the deſired effect, he had recourſe to other meaſures, which too fatally ſucceeded. He pretended to be ſincerely ſorry for the manner in which he had behaved; and alledged that he had been intirely led into an error reſpecting the marquis's character, by ſome envious reports which he *then* found were erroneous, and earneſtly ſolicited my Maſter's friendſhip and forgiveneſs. The marquis, open and generous, readily complied, and they renewed the connection which the late diſagreeable miſunderſtanding had interrupted.

"The family of the Baron la Marche conſiſted of one daughter and two ſons. Theodoſia was, at the time I now mention, about fifteen, and as lovely as ſhe was amiable. It was not probable that Edgar could behold ſo much beauty and excellence without tender emotion. Theodoſia likewiſe took delight in his company, and a mutual affection ſeemed to gain ground daily. The marquis beheld their youthful fondneſs with delight. Not ſo the baron: his views were more ambitious. The Duke d'Arville had ſeen Theodoſia, and had become a captive to her charms; but, as ſhe was at that time too young to enter into any ſolemn engagement, he obtained the baron's promiſe to beſtow her upon him when he returned from Savoy, whither he was going to take poſſeſſion of an eſtate lately fallen to him by the death of an uncle. He was now hourly expected, and the young lovers dreaded the ſpeedy termination of all their happineſs. Edgar implored his father's interference, and obtained it. The marquis was repulſed by the baron with ſcorn, and withdrew, overcome with grief and indignation, to condole his unhappy ſon.

"Meanwhile the arrival of the Duke was announced, and preparations were making at the Caſtle du Barré for the celebration of the approaching nuptials. Edgar ſunk into a moſt alarming deſpondency, which impaired his health. The phyſician who attended him preſcribed a warmer climate, and ordered him to paſs into Italy.

"One day he called me to him, with a degree of ſerioufneſs in his looks which terrified me. 'Pierre (ſaid he), will you be my friend? Alas! I have no other.'

"His manner affected me. I aſſured him I would do any thing in my power to ſerve him. He then acquainted me that he had had ſeveral private interviews with Theodoſia, whom he had at laſt prevailed upon to give him her hand, without the knowledge of either the baron or the marquis. I ſtarted. He prevented me from ſpeaking, by ſaying: 'I ſee you diſapprove of my plan!—then added, with ſpirit, 'By confiding to you this ſecret, I have put myſelf in your power, and now throw myſelf entirely upon your generoſity.'

"What could I ſay? Too fatally I agreed to aſſiſt him in whatever he ſhould propoſe. He looked grateful and delighted, and continued:

"Theodoſia has a friend in her confeſſor. He will aſſiſt us. To-morrow I will ſteal out, and meet her at a cottage belonging to one of my father's tenants, where the prieſt will unite us. We will then throw ourſelves at the marquis's feet, and obtain his pardon and conſent to let Theodoſia accompany me to Italy.'

"He pauſed. The ſcheme was ſo wild and dangerous, that I endeavoured to diſſuade him from it. He reminded me reproachfully of my promiſe; and again I was enticed to renew it. We planned the hour moſt expedient for our ſcheme; and all ſeemed likely to ſucceed to our wiſh."

Here Edmund roſe; and, reminding his ſiſter that night was faſt approaching, requeſted Pierre to defer the remainder of his narrative till their return to the cottage; being apprehenſive that they would not otherwiſe have time to view the caſtle. Margaretta reluctantly complied, and they proceeded to explore the deſolated apartments of that dreary building. Ella did not ſeem ſo much appalled at its gloomy horrors as did Margaretta. She had frequently accompanied Pierre when he ſhowed the caſtle to travellers, whoſe curioſity induced them to viſit it.

The north wing of the caſtle ſeemed faſt falling to decay; and the apartments were ſo damp and comfortleſs that it would be a work of time to make any of them habitable.

They afterwards paſſed on to a ſuite of apartments belonging to the eaſtern wing, which ſeemed more commodious: they had been fitted up in a more modern ſtyle; and Pierre ſhowed them the apartments which had been occupied by the marquis, and wept as he paſſed a ſmall room, where, he ſaid, he uſed to ſleep.

"Ah! (ſaid he) I am an old man now; but I ſtill remember the ſcenes of my youth; and the remembrance gives me a ſenſation I cannot deſcribe: thoſe alone who have experienced the loſs of what they once loved, can form an idea of it."

Edmund ſighed, and a long pauſe enſued.

From the windows they had a view of an extenſive country, even at that time of the year adorned with a delightful verdure. Pleaſed with the beauty of the ſurrounding ſcenery, Margaretta forgot the innate gloomineſs of the manſion, and readily conſented to make the caſtle their reſidence during their ſtay in France. Night, now rapidly approaching, ſuſpended any further inveſtigation; and they quitted the caſtle with alacrity.

When they reached they cottage, the found Jaqueline impatiently expecting them. She had prepared a comfortable repaſt, of which they cheerfully partook. Pierre was then requeſted by Edmund to procure ſome workmen to repair the caſtle, and render it habitable; and alſo to find out, among the peaſantry, ſome young folks whom he could ſend thither as ſervants. To this Margaretta added her petition that they would permit Ella to accompany her as a companion, for a ſhort time at leaſt. Pierre ſeemed much averſe to this arrangement at firſt; but, at length, overpowered by their united ſolicitations, and Jaqueline heartily joining the petitioners, he gave an unwilling aſſent.

He then aſſured them that in a few days all ſhould be ready for their reception at the caſtle, and afterward proceeded to relate the ſequel of his tale:

"At night (continued he) Theodoſia made ſome pretence to retire early, and ſlipped from the caſtle unperceived. She joined us at the cottage, attended by Father Francis, where we waited with the moſt alarming apprehenſions. To relate minutely the various emotions which paſſed in every breaſt, would be too trying for your patience: let it ſuffice, the ſacred ceremony was performed, and Theodoſia fainted in the arms of her huſband. It was a conſiderable time before ſhe was ſufficiently recovered to return with us to the caſtle. At length ſhe permitted herſelf to be led into the

preſence of the marquis; when, throwing herſelf at his feet, ſhe implored pardon and protection. A fatal preſentiment ſeemed to ruſh at once to his heart, and deprived him of ſenſe and motion. He dropped inſtantaneouſly in a fit of apoplexy, and was carried to bed; where he continued in a moſt alarming ſtate.

"During this time my young maſter entertained the moſt dreadful apprehenſions for the fate of Theodoſia, whom it was impoſſible for him to conduct to a place of ſafety during the alarming indiſpoſition of the marquis. At length it was determined that I ſhould conduct her to ſome ſecure retreat. We accordingly quitted the caſtle, in the diſguiſe of peaſants. We paſſed the foreſt in ſafety; but, juſt as we were congratulating ourſelves upon our fortunate eſcape, we were ſurrounded by a party of vaſſals belonging to the baron, and headed by his eldeſt ſon. I fought boldly, determined to protect my lady to the laſt; until, overpowered by their number, I at length dropped ſenſeleſs from my horſe, and was left by the aſſaſſins covered with wounds. Some benevolent peaſants took me to their hut, and uſed every means for my recovery. Their humanity preſerved my life; and in a ſhort time I was enabled to return to the caſtle. Alas! my dear maſter had breathed his laſt! The dreadful tidings I had to communicate, added to the late melancholy event, threatened to overthrow the reaſon of the diſtracted Edgar. For ſome months he lingered on the bed of ſickneſs. Youth and a good conſtitution at length triumphed over his malady; and, at his firſt return to health, he declared it his intention to purſue his wife, whom the aſſaſſins had carried off, even to death. He kept his word, only to plunge himſelf in ſtill greater miſery."

The lateneſs of the hour now rendered it neceſſary for the party to break up. Margaretta, with difficulty, conquered the curioſity which was excited in her mind by Pierre's narrative; and, after obtaining from him a promiſe to renew it at the earlieſt opportunity, took her candle and retired to her apartment; her thoughts wholly occupied with the adventures of the unfortunate Theodoſia.

For ſeveral days Pierre was prevented, by the indiſpenſible duties of his ſtation, from continuing his recital. At length Margaretta took the opportunity, one evening when ſhe found him leſs employed than uſual, to remind him of the unfiniſhed ſtate in which he had left his narrative, and entreated he would ſatisfy her curioſity, by favouring her with the concluſion of it. The reſt of the family, being preſent,

ſeconded her requeſt. He inſtantly proceeded, in the following manner:

"You will not, madam, I hope, accuſe me of vanity in making ſuch frequent mention of my own actions, as it is almoſt impoſſible for me to avoid it; my fate being ſo cloſely involved with that of my maſter.

"I had at one time a profeſſed attachment to Jaqueline (Theodoſia's woman), which proved afterward of more advantage to my maſter than we had ever thought of. By her means I learned whatever paſſed at the caſtle. I ſtill carried on my communications with her, and from her gained intelligence that Theodoſia had been brought home, treated with almoſt inhuman ſeverity; and that the baron had ſent her to a convent in Italy, near Padua, where ſhe would remain for life, or till ſuch time as the marquis ſhould withdraw his pretenſions."

"How can you account (ſaid Margaretta, interrupting Pierre) for the baron's obſtinacy, in rejecting a man of the marquis's rank?"

"In three ways, madam (replied Pierre): firſt, the baron's pride of anceſtry was great: the title of marquis was but newly created; and that order was, in many inſtances, (to uſe the baron's words), a muſhroom nobility: ſecondly, his avarice was great; and it was well known that, although the marquis was endowed with a competent fortune, he was not ſo affluent as the duke, to whom the baron raiſed his ambitious eye; the laſt and greateſt objection was, that, through ſome family arrangement, the marquis was a heretic."

Margaretta allowed the weight of *this* objection; and Pierre proceeded:

"Loaded with Jaqueline's intelligence, I repaired joyfully to my dear maſter, and gladdened his ſorrowful heart with the proſpect of once more beholding a beloved wife.

"I attended him to Italy, whither he directly haſtened, and immediately went to the convent of St. Clare; at the gates of which, with all the impetuoſity of a lover, he demanded Theodoſia as his wife. The plea was denied; and, to his inexpreſſible mortification, he learned that the baron had not placed his daughter there as a boarder, but as a novice, and that ſhe was actually now wearing the white veil.

"The lady abbeſs declared, that, as the young lady was placed there, and expreſsly under her care, by her father, to no authority but his would ſhe reſign ſo precious a charge.

After considerable altercation, the only indulgence the marquis could obtain was that of seeing his wife through the grate.

" My poor master eagerly embraced this permission. Sister Frances (the name Theodosia had assumed) was summoned. Her pale and altered face filled the marquis with grief and rage He implored she would permit him to effect her release; to which she despairingly consented; and, from herself, he gained the means by which he might effect her deliverance. She gave him a direction to the monastery of St. Egbert, which was about three miles distant, and desired him there to enquire for father Luke, who was the identical friar that married them, and was now confessor to the nuns in the convent of St. Clare. Thither he repaired, and easily obtained an interview. The good father readily promised his assistance; and, in the course of half an hour's conference, they planned the method of proceeding to be adopted.

' Some fraud will be unavoidably necessary (said Father Luke) to obtain our end: you must, therefore, write to Theodosia, which I will take care to deliver to her at matins to-morrow, in which you must advise her to pretend illness when retiring to rest, and to intimate a desire to the abbess to see me. This will have the desired effect: I shall be immediately sent for, and will contrive to persuade the sisterhood that it is indispensibly necessary for me to continue with her all night. I design to procure a dress similar to my own, in which sister Frances may disguise herself. You must provide a carriage and a change of dress, with which Pierre may wait at the end of the road leading to the wood. With this key, which gives me free access into the convent, you may enter the chapel; and, in the vestibule, wait for Theodosia, who will join you when the bell chimes three. For myself, I shall, at break of day, return to the monastery. It will be some hours after that sister Frances will be missed.'

' But (said the marquis) how will it be possible to prevent the abbess from being acquainted with the part you acted in our escape?'

' Leave that to me (replied father Luke, significantly). Let me have your purse well replenished; and I will engage the superior's anger will not fall very heavily on my head.'

" The marquis was both shocked and surprised.

' Is it possible? (he exclaimed)—Has gold the power even to corrupt the sacred professors of religion?'

' And are you so ignorant, my son (rejoined the friar) to suppose it ever fallible? However, be satisfied. If you

can eſcape without the ſiſterhood being alarmed, you are ſafe; for, if even that powerful opiate ſhould fail of its uſual effect, I have other reſources, which are certain to ſucceed. Yes (he added, while his eyes kindled with ſudden fire); I can awe this imperious abbeſs into ſilence. But I muſt now attend veſpers. Adieu! Heaven proſper you!'

"At that time the mind of the marquis was too much occupied with his own affairs, to dwell long on the myſterious manner in which father Luke had concluded his directions. Upon leiſure, however, they recurred forcibly to his memory; and, when he returned to the monaſtery with his letter, he expreſſed his deſire for information. The father graſped his hand with energy; and, the tears ſtarting to his eyes, ſaid:

'My ſtory is ſhort, and to you, unintereſting. It may not perhaps be ſo to ſiſter Frances. This (he continued, taking a roll of paper from his boſom) give to her. It may perhaps excite a tear from her to the memory of her mother.'

"Again he wrung the hand of the marquis, and quitted him abruptly. They met no more.

"At the appointed hour the following evening, we had every thing in readineſs. My maſter entered the chapel, and preſently to my inexpreſſible delight, returned the *fair friar*. The marchioneſs ſoon threw aſide her gown and cawl; but, as a diſguiſe was ſtill neceſſary, aſſumed a Spaniſh dreſs procured for the occaſion.

"We ſoon reached Rome, where they were publicly eſpouſed; and, all danger of ſeparation being then ſuppoſed over, the marquis no longer delayed his return to the caſtle of Montreuil.

"After a few days ſtay at Rome, we returned; but happineſs was no more to be found within the once peaceful walls of our caſtle! The very firſt night after our arrival, the gates were burſt open, and my dear maſter was dragged from his bed by a party of armed men, who produced a *lettre-de-cachet*, by which they were authoriſed to convey him to the Baſtile. In the midſt of the confuſion, to complete our horror, a freſh party of men arrived, with the baron's order to bring the marchioneſs to the caſtle. The agony of their parting is indiſcribable. I accompanied him, in ſpite of reſiſtance, to the priſon, where I cloſed the eyes of the beſt of maſters.

"I was granted my liberty, and returned to learn the fate of the unfortunate marchioneſs from Jaqueline, whoſe affection my troubles had not weakened. She acquainted me

that Theodoſia had been treated with the greateſt ſeverity by her inhuman father; that the uſuage ſhe received, added to her geief at loſing the marquis, brought on a delirious complaint, with which ſhe ſtruggled ſome months, and terminated her miſerable exiſtence in bringing a female infant into the world, which ſoon, it is ſaid, ſhared the ſame fate.

"The baron, as if happy to be releaſed from his troubleſome charge, ſoon reſumed all his gaiety, and launched into every extravagance, to gratify the paſſions of his eldeſt ſon, a vicious and profligate young fellow. Conſiderable property was entailed upon the eldeſt child of the baron, whether male or female, and to its heirs for ever. This property, ſince the death of the marchioneſs, devolves upon Frederic, the ſon I mentioned, and enables him to indulge in all his exceſſes without injuring his patrimonial inheritance. There is now one ſon at home, named Theodore, the very counterpart of the amiable Theodoſia, whoſe fate he ever laments; for which commiſeration he is deteſted by his tyrannic father and brother, who treat him with unceaſing rigour.

"Soon after the death of the marchioneſs, her father ſeized upon this caſtle, in her right; but, as his conſcience was rather uneaſy to him at that time, it remained an uſeleſs incumbrance; and, ſomehow or other, the ſtory of the marquis getting wind, reports of a very injurious nature to the character of the baron were circulated; to do away which, he has put it up for ſale at a very trifling price, in hopes that, after it has been ſome time inhabited, the reports, which were gaining ground every day, will be forgot.

"Jaqueline, no longer willing to ſtay in the caſtle, gave me her hand. Together we retired to this cottage. I farm my ſmall portion of land: and, but for the melancholy remembrance of paſt events, ſhould be completely happy."

"Pray (aſked Margaretta, when Pierre had finiſhed), may I requeſt to know how long you have been married?"

"Almoſt fifteen years, madam," ſaid Pierre incautiouſly.

Margaretta ſmiled, and then changed the ſubject.

"There is one thing (ſaid ſhe) vexes me. Did you never know the contents of the roll of paper given by father Luke to the marquis?"

"I did not, madam (replied Pierre); it was never opened by the marchioneſs, to my knowledge: and Jaqueline, who was in her confidence, ſays the ſame."

Margaretta muſed awhile; then turned to Edmund, and aſked his opinion.

He replied, that "he did not think Pierre's narration had any tendency to make them renounce their intention of reſiding in the caſtle, as they need have no intercourſe with the baron."

Their eſtabliſhment was ſoon ſettled; nominated by Pierre, and approved by Edmund. There was to attend upon him, as his eſquire, a peaſant youth, named Maurice, who was (in La Motte's phraſe) "able to turn his hand to any thing."

Gillian, an elderly clean woman, who, with her little black-eyed daughter, Louiſa, were to ſerve in the capacity of cook and houſe-maid, completed their houſehold; except a black, named Oda, whoſe provence it was to take care of the horſes, and bring proviſions from the neighbouring market-town.

Oda had formerly belonged to a party of banditti, who held rendezvous in a cavern in the foreſt. Being diſcovered by the police, a party of officers were ſent to apprehend them. Oda, who had ever been diſtinguiſhed by his valour and intrepidity, fought furiouſly. All his exertions were, notwithſtanding his bravery, vain: his comrades were totally routed; and he with difficulty made his eſcape, covered with wounds. He reached the wood which was adjacent to Pierre's cottage, at nightfall; and that benevolent cottager, hearing the groans of diſtreſs, haſtened to his aſſiſtance. Alarmed by the ſenſe of his danger, Oda voluntarily confeſſed who he was, and expreſſed the moſt ardent repentance for his paſt conduct. La Motte, whoſe boſom was ever alive to humanity, received him; and, with unremitting vigilance, attended him during his illneſs. The poor wretch profeſſed the warmeſt gratitude, and promiſed to ſerve him the remainder of his life. He had neither money nor friends; and offered La Motte to work day and night, if he would but keep him as his ſlave.

Pierre, happy to ſave a ſoul from perdition, found many ways of making him uſeful; and was in time ſo much pleaſed with his conduct, that he entertained not a doubt of his fidelity: and now, as ſuch an advantageous ſituation ſeemed to offer for the aggrandiſement of his *protege*, he recommended him, with enthuſiaſtic encomiums, to Edmund. "For (ſaid Pierre) if he is once attached to you, which I am ſure he ſoon will be, he will guard your property at the hazard of his life, and will be of more ſervice to you than my houſe-

dog; for *(entre nous)* as honour is the word among thieves, he will be able to prevent any of his brother banditti from moleſting you."

Edmund laughed at this whimſical recommendation, which, nevertheleſs, had ſome reaſon in it; and the matter was ſpeedily decided.

Edmund every day inſpected the progreſs of his workmen in the caſtle, and had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing them proceed rapidly in their improvements. The aſpect of the ſouth wing was entirely changed, and became now neat and commodious.

In a fortnight it was ready for their reception; when Edmund and Margaretta, with their little ſuite, Ella, Gillian, Louiſa, Maurice, and Oda, repaired to take poſſeſſion of their new reſidence; which, to the romantic mind of Margaretta, had a thouſand charms; and Ella's little heart, fluttering at the flattering proſpects drawn by her vivid imagination, felt equal delight.

It needed not very powerful efforts to reconcile them to their new habitation; the luxuriant beauty of the ſurrounding landſcape could not fail exciting enthuſiaſtic admiration in every ſpectator. Margaretta was not inſenſible to the charms of nature; and, happy in the ſociety of her attentive and humble friend Ella, her time paſſed very pleaſantly at the caſtle de Montreuil. Together they worked, read, ſang, or walked; while the condeſcending and affable manners of the one, and the unaſſuming gentleneſs of the other, inſenſibly leſſened the diſtance between them, and eſtabliſhed a confidential freedom, the more agreeable as being the leſs reſtrained.

In one of their ſocial rambles, the fineneſs of the evening tempted them to ſtroll to the cottage of Pierre la Motte. The rich tints which the ſetting ſun caſt on the ſurrounding ſcenery forcibly attracted the attention of Margaretta; and Ella, withdrawing her arm, wandered, in pleaſing meditation, a few paces forward.

They were on the edge of the eminence on which the caſtle ſtood, when a ſhrill whiſtle cauſed Margaretta to ſtart from her reverie. Her foot ſlipped, and ſhe rolled with violence down the precipice. Alarmed at her ſcreams, Ella haſtened after her as faſt as poſſible; and, when arrived at the bottom, found her, to all appearance lifeleſs, ſupported in the arms of an elegant youth, who leaned over her with the moſt anxious ſolicitude depictured in his countenance.

For ſome time, Ella was too much occupied in her endeavours to recover Margaretta, to pay any attention to the

ſtranger; who, as ſoon as returning recollection ſeemed to animate his fair burthen, extended his hand to Ella, and requeſted to be introduced. She bluſhed, looked down, and, in a tremulous accent, murmured, "Theodore la Marche!"

Margaretta returned his ſalutation with ſome embaraſſment; and, not being materially hurt by the fall, they proceeded on their way. Theodore entered into a familiar chat with Ella; and, under various trifling pretences, continued to wait with them. His converſation was lively, ſenſible, and intereſting: his manners and perſon inſinuating. When about to return, he begged to be indulged in the pleaſure of ſeeing them home—a requeſt which, though undeſired by Margaretta, was urged in ſuch an unpreſuming manner, that ſhe found it impoſſible to refuſe. When preſented to Edmund as the preſerver of his ſiſter, he modeſtly declined all thanks, proteſting that it was entirely owing to his calling to his dog that ſhe met with an accident which might have proved fatal in its conſequences.

Edmund laughing, ſaid he feared the danger was not yet over, and they ſoon became the beſt friends imaginable.

When Theodore took his leave, Margaretta rallied Ella upon the attentions of the young la Marche. To avoid her arch inſinuation, Ella ſaid, that when the unkind treatment of the baron rendered home irkſome to Theodore, he would often pay a viſit to his old ſervant at the cottage. At thoſe times he would ſit and read to her, often correcting her voice when ſinging, and taking pains to inſtruct her in Italian. She declared he had always behaved to her with the affection of a brother rather than with any other pretenſions; that her father and mother had always encouraged the intimacy, which ſhe was certain they would not have done, had there been any impropriety.

She ſpoke with a warmth that excited Margaretta's aſtoniſhment. Edmund ſmiled at her eloquence; but there was a kind of contemptuous motion in his under lip that cut her to the ſoul; and ſhe haſtily withdrew, to conceal the tears which unbidden ruſhed to her eyes. Margaretta inſtantly quitted the room, firſt gently chiding her brother for his conduct, and went in ſearch of Ella. She found her leaning againſt the wall, in an agony of tears. She addreſſed her in the moſt endearing expreſſions; and, after ſhe was a little ſoothed into compoſure, led her back to the ſitting-room; and the ſubject was then dropped.

A whimſical occurrence happened, a few days after, which ſerved but to confirm the ſuſpicions which Edmund and his

ſiſter had entertained, with regard to Ella's attachment. Walking one evening in the garden, they accidentally heard a converſation between Oda and Maurice; the latter of whom was praiſing the beauty of his favourite Roſa.

Oda replied, with triumph, "Your girl may be pretty enough; but ſhe is nothing to compare with my Ella."

"Your Ella! (replied Maurice, contemptuouſly)—Who made her yours?"

"Her conſent and mine," retorted Odo with a grin.

Edmund turned to Ella: her pale countenance ſufficiently denied the veracity of the charge.

Unable to maſter his indignation, Edmund, ruſhing between the trees, ſeized Oda by the collar, exclaiming "Villain! how dare you ſpeak thus of Miſs la Motte?"

Oda, with a ſpring diſengaging himſelf from his graſp, replied, with intrepidity, "By the ſame authority with which you preſume to interfere between us."

Edmund clapped his hand on his ſword; but was prevented from drawing it by the ſcreams of Ella, who fainted in the arms of Margaretta. He flew to ſupport her; and Oda ſtalked away, grinding his teeth with horrid malignity.

Margaretta cut the lace of her ſtays, to give free circulation; when a ſmall miniature of a young man, which ſhe inſtantly recollected to be the reſemblance of Theodore, arreſted her attention. She endeavoured to conceal it from Edmund: but it was too late; his eyes were already rivitted upon it. Willing, however, to ſpare her delicacy, they let the incident paſs unnoticed; and Ella was conveyed into the caſtle, ignorant of the diſcovery that had been made.

The following morning, Theodore paid them a viſit; but was received by Edmund with a formal politeneſs, by Margaretta with undiſſembled coldneſs, and by Ella with a mixture of artleſs tenderneſs and apprehenſive timidity. Surpriſed at a reception ſo unfriendly, Theodore ſoon put an end to his viſit, and took his leave of them with evident uneaſineſs.

When they ſeparated for the night, Ella, no longer able to endure the coldneſs with which ſhe was treated both by Edmund and his ſiſter, threw her arms round the neck of the later, and implored to know in what inſtance ſhe had offended.

Margaretta, moved by her tears from her aſſumed reſerve, embraced her affectionately, and aſſured her, that it was only ſolicitude for her welfare made her act in a manner which might perhaps be thought unkind and officious by

Ella; adding, in a ſofter voice, "Believe me, Ella, my affection for you is not diminiſhed, although you have endeavoured to deceive me."

"Heavens! (cried Ella) in what have I ever attempted to deceive my beloved benefactreſs?"

"By concealing your attachment," Margaretta replied, regarding her attentively.

Confuſed and abaſhed, the trembling Ella ſunk at her feet.

"Forgive me, deareſt madam: let the hopeleſſneſs of my ſtate plead my pardon; but, oh! madam, now you have diſcovered my unhappy ſecret, will you not ſpurn me from you for ever?"

"No, my eſtimable girl (cried Margaretta, raiſing her), I will only attempt to point out to you the impropriety of cheriſhing a paſſion which is ſo unlikely ever to be gratified."

Ella raiſed her eyes, with a melancholy expreſſion, to Margaretta, who continued "at leaſt, while the preſent inſupportable obſtacles remain. The diſtance at which fortune has placed you from the object of your affection, precludes even hope, notwithſtanding a mutual paſſion may exiſt."

Ella graſped her arm.—"Ah! do you ſay . . . ."—Then, drawing her hand acroſs her forehead, reſumed, "However that may be, do not think, dear madam, that I am ſo unworthy your kind regard, as to encourage a ſentiment which, I plainly ſee, would be productive of ſo much pain to my beſt, my only friend."

Margaretta ſtarted, and changed colour. Ella heſitated, and continued—

"No: I have a ſoul that could never harbour an ungrateful wiſh. From this moment, I will ſuppreſs my preſumptuous hopes.

The dignity of her manner, and the tear of inward diſtreſs that gliſtened in her eyes, ſo much affected Margaretta, that ſhe caught her in her arms, embraced her affectionately, and vowed ſhe would ſacrifice her own deareſt intereſt to promote the happineſs of her young friend. Their ſpirits were ſo much exhauſted, that, unable to continue the converſation, they retired immediately to reſt.

The converſation of the preceding evening ſeemed to have removed a weight from the minds of Margaretta and Ella, which had long ſeemed to oppreſs them, and they met at table with a cheerfulneſs, the reſult of inward rectitude; but, as if fate was determined to fruſtrate their generous deſign, Edmund was ſeized with an impenetrable melancholy, which all the lively ſallies of Ella proved inefficient to diſpel. At

length, to amuse him, Margaretta, who attributed his gloom to the effects of some letters that he had received from England, proposed visiting the western tower—a part which had hitherto remained unexplored by them—a part to which superstitious horrors had ever been annexed.

They ascended the spiral stair-case, and arrived at a spacious saloon, round which were doors of rich carved work, the figures of which were very much mutilated; in the interstices were placed figures of warriors in complete armour, of such exquisite workmanship that they exactly resembled life.

Gillian, who attended with the great bunch of keys, tried several before she could find one which belonged to either of the doors. While she was trying them, Margaretta was expressing to her brother her regret at never having discovered this suite of apartments before.

"Who knows, my dear (said Edmund, when she had finished) what terrible demons may inhabit these rooms? Surely, they have not remained to moulder in neglect without some cause."

By this time one of the doors were opened, and they entered a large dormitory. The furniture was dark green damask, with broad gold fringe; the windows, high and narrow, were painted in strange devices; the moth-eaten tapestry represented the whole history of the bible, but what surprised them most, was, that the whole air of the room, though evidently falling to decay, seemed to discover signs of recent inhabitation.

Ella said, she had heard from her father that the old marquis had always been partial to that part of the castle, and had taken great pains, during the life of his lady, to ornament it; but that, after his death, his son, not being able to endure the mournful recollection, had caused it to be shut up.

This was further authenticated by a large library, which opened into it, and which they found in tolerable order. Such an acquisition gave Margaretta, who was passionately fond of reading, infinite delight; and she secretly resolved to make this her favourite retirement. Taking some of the books from the shelves she was mortified to find that they were chiefly old Greek and Latin authors, none of which she understood; a great number of German, and some poets in the Arabic. This misfortune was soon repaid by the discovery of the first Italian poet, and the dramatic works of our best authors. These were valuable acquisitions to the whole party, who now more than ever regretted the time that had been lost previous to the discovery.

The then quited the library, and passed through several dreary and comfortless rooms: the last the came to was a noble picture-gallery, adorned with portraits of the Le Brun family

for centuries paſt. One picture repreſented a venerable warrior, whom, by the martial tropies that where placed round it, they concluded to be the old marquis.

"And this (ſaid Margaretta, pointing to the next) is in all probability his ſon."

The figure ſhe alluded to was that of a youth remarkably handſome, and of a moſt graceful deportment; a page was holding the bridle of a horſe, which the cavalier was preparing to mount; while the eyes of the latter were turned on the ſpectator with a look of anxious regret, and ſeemed to expreſs a parting adieu

The admiration of Margaretta was for a moment ſuſpended by Ella, who, taking the minature from her boſom, alternatly viewed that and the portrait, exclaming, "What a reſemblance! It is certainly the ſame!"

Margaretta advanced to view them; and beheld with ſurpriſe, not the features of Theodore la Marche, but thoſe of the young marquis.

"Pardon me, madam (ſaid Ella), that I have never made you acquainted with the manner in which I became poſſeſſed of this picture. But the whole circumſtance carries with it ſuch an air of romance, that I am always unwlliing to repeat it: I will, to night, relate the particulars."

"I fear (ſaid Edmund, with an air that he meant to be gay) Theodore will find a formidable rival in yon blooming canvas."

"Reſerve your raillery (ſaid Ella) till you have heard my ſtory; then I will give you licence to torment me."

Their converſation was interupted by a loud noiſe in the corridor; a door was ſhut with voilence, and footſteps were diſtinctly heard advancing, and again died away in diſtance. Ella flew to Edmund for protection; but haſtily left her to the care of Margaretta, who was a perfect heroine, and went in ſearch of the object that cauſed their alarm.

Voices ſtill continued to be heard now much nearer, and the name of Ella was repeated ſeveral times. Frantic with terror, Margaretta called on Edmund. Her courage began to fail; but no ſound was returned. To complete their horrid expectations, a door at the further end of the gallery, hitherto unperceived by them, was violently ſhaken, and at length burſt open. Unable any longer to command her reſolution, Ella was ſinking to the ground, when ſhe was caught in the arms of Theodore.

"Gracious heaven! (cried Margaretta) why did you terrify us in ſuch a manner? Where is my brother?"

"Let him ſpeak for himſelf," ſaid Theodore, pointing to Edmund, who that moment entered; and, perceiving the

situation of Ella, snatched her from his arms, exclaiming, "Good God, sir! you have killed her!—My dearest Ella!"

Margaretta turned pale, and tremblingly cast her eyes toward Theodore; who, smiling at his unguarded vehemence, replied, "Not quite so bad. See she revives."

"She had indeed recovered, and heard the last words of Edmund, and felt the pressure with which he clasped her to his bosom. She disengaged herself from his grasp; and replied, her face and neck covered with crimson, "Nay, do not accuse the chevalier: it was entirely my own superstitious folly."

Edmund looked very angry still; and Theodore, to account for the alarm he had so unintentionally caused them, alledged, that, arriving at the castle he learned from Louisa that they were gone to explore the western tower. Not willing to be omitted in such an heroic exploit, he hastened after them; broke the first door he met with, which happened to open into a dark room; that, hearing their voices at a distance, he called to Ella, that her reply might convince him of their situation. He said, the echo had at first startled him; but upon repetition, he became diverted with that which, by multiplying the sounds, gave them so much terror. "So much power has habit," added he, "that this castle, which once I could not enter without the most poignant affliction, now affords me a pleasing melancholy when in it."

"Perhaps, we may attribute your cure to more causes than habit," said Edmund, drily.

This was uttered in a moment of pique; but, no sooner did he observe the dejection which overcast the features of Theodore, than the natural benevolence of his heart returned, and catching his hand with warmth, he said, "Come, my friend, let us quit this scene. I perceive it revives unpleasant recollections."

When Theodore was taking leave, he said, pensively, "I fear, my dear friends, I shall soon be deprived of the pleasure of your society. My brother, who has been in England, has, I understand, married there; and is preparing, with his lady, to visit my father at the castle. My visits here will therefore, of necessity, be less frequent than heretofore;—a privation which will be more severely felt by myself than any one."

Edmund took upon him to answer for them all, that he did them injustice; but the eyes of the females spoke more assurance to his heart than his friend's rhetoric.

When he was gone, Edmund said, "I declare, I feel uncommonly interested for that young man. Nor am I singular in my opinion, I believe; for his departure seems to have cast an unaccountable gloom over us all."

"It has (said Margaretta, starting from a profound me-

ditation into which she had fallen.) Do Ella, tell us the history of your picture now. It will amuse us much, and drive horrid thoughts out of my head."

"Willingly," said Ella; and immediately began:

"It was, as well as I can remember," said she, when I was about six years of age, that I was confined to my bed through some slight indisposition. My bed was in a little closet adjoining the room where my father and mother usually sat, when I heard the former say—

'How unfortunate it is that Ella should be ill just now when she is particularly wanted at the castle!—At any rate her visits there must be less frequent than before.'

'Indeed,' said my mother, 'it will soon be necessary for them to be intirely witheld, as it is an indulgence likely to be productive of more harm than good on either side. Besides, Ella is now growing too old to let such a singular circumstance pass without observation; for—

"Here I lost the sound of their words; and, presently, they retired to rest. On the following day I was rather better; and my mother, after fondling me a great deal, took some beautiful cloaths out of an old chest, and dressed me in them. I asked innocently, where they were going to take me? They replied, to my godmama, who was sick.

"Day wore away; and, as night approached, they began to prepare for my excursion. My father wrapped me in a large cloak, the hood of which he drew so much over my face that it intirely obstructed my sight; my mother held a lantern; and then the procession began. The walk seemed to me a long one. At length we arrived at a high iron grate, where my father put me down, in order to open it; which when done, he again took me in his arms, and descended a flight of narrow stone stairs. When we reached the bottom, he took the cloak from me; and, giving me into my mother's arms, quitted us.

"Again he returned, and again I was set on foot; and, between them, they led met into a spacious apartment. A dismal lamp was burning on a table near a sopha, upon which reclined a lady, whose figure, though pale and emaciated, struck me as very beautiful. My mother led me to her. Her arms were extended to receive me, and when clapsed in her embrace, I felt warm tears fall on the back of my neck. My little heart was too much agitated to attend to what passed; but, after a while, I heard her say, 'I feel, my dear friends, I shall not live to see this sweet girl again. I will therefore now bestow upon her an invaluable gift.' She then took this miniature from her bosom,

kiſſed it, and I ſaw large tears roll down her cheeks, as ſhe regarded the features with admiration. Then, tying it round my neck, ſhe ſaid, 'Be careful of this, my dear Ella: it has been for many years my only conſolation.'

"I looked at the picture; then piteouſly in her face, ſaying, 'Indeed, it is very pretty; but I cannot take it from you, while you cry for it.'

"She claſped me eagerly in her arms, preſt me cloſe to her boſom, then putting me from her, cried haſtily, 'take her away! take her away, Pierre!—It is making life too valuable to me.'

"My father was leading me from the room, when ſhe again called me back, and embraced me tenderly; then turning, hid her face in the ſopha, while my mother took me out. My father came after us: he led us through ſeveral dark and cold paſſages, and again wrapped me in the cloak, from which I was no more releaſed till we were within our own cottage. I aſked ſeveral childiſh queſtions; but was always repulſed with ſo much anger that I dared not make any further inquiries. Yet never, were I to live a thouſand years, will the leaſt action of the ſcene be obliterated from my memory: it made an impreſſion upon my mind never to be eraſed.

"The picture I was cautioned never to ſhow to any one, upon pain of their moſt ſevere diſpleaſure; and I loved and honoured them too much to diſobey them.

"A few weeks after this, my father came home, after a ſhort abſence, in a very penſive humour. He had been to the market-town, and among his uſual purchaſes, he this time brought a black-hat, ſkirt, and ſaſh for me. His hand trembled violently as he tied them on, and my mother wept bitterly. The next morning they were both in deep mourning. I aſked them why they wore thoſe diſmal cloaths. They told me that the ſick lady was dead, and that I ſhould never ſee her again. At firſt I fretted much; but ſoon forgot, except when I looked at the picture, which never failed to excite ſome mournful ideas. My father and mother have ever ſince carefully avoided the ſubject; and I dare not aſk any explanation of the myſtery."

"When ſhe had concluded, ſhe waited in evident anxiety to hear their opinion. Margaretta was, however, too prudent to reveal the ſurmiſes ſhe had formed; and contented herſelf with ſaying, "Time, my dear girl, may probably explain all."

Edmund muſed for ſome time, without ſpeaking; then, riſing, he ſaid, "This is a ſtrange ſtory, indeed! Have you no ſuſpicions, Ella, with reſpect to that lady?"

"None, ſir," ſhe replied; "except once I vaguely conjectured—but the thing was too abſurd to be retained—I own,

I entertained a hope that it was the unfortunate lady Theodosia who was supposed dead."

"I admit," said Edmund, "that there is some foundation for your surmises; and the resemblance of the miniature to the portrait in the gallery confirms the idea."

"But her concern for me—," said Ella,

"Is but natural," replied Margaretta. "Her attachment to her faithful Jaqueline, and the long services of your father to her husband, could not fail to make their offspring dear to her.

Shortly after, Edmund quitted the room; and Margaretta resuming the discourse of the last evening, said, "But tell me, Ella, has Theodore ever endeavoured to learn your sentiments respecting himself?"

"He need not, madam: the familiar intercourse we have ever kept up, precluded all restraint."

Margaretta shook her head. "Dangerous sophistry, my dear girl," said she. "I do not admire platonic affection at your age. His engaging manners are calculated to excite interest in more experienced hearts than yours, and as your union is an event which at present we can look forward to only at an immense distance, I would wish you to pay a strict regard to your conduct."

"An union! dear madam, (cried Ella), what could lead you to think that an union with Theodore could make me happy."

"Your own confession!" replied Margaretta, regarding her with a look of the utmost astonishment.

Ella turned pale as death, and leaned on the back of her chair, to prevent falling to the ground.

"Ella," said Margaretta, "what am I to suppose from this conduct? How can I act to promote your wishes!"

"Ah, my benefactress!" cried Ella, recovering from her first emotion, "forgive me. Suffer me to return to my parents. I will never intrude my unhappy fate upon you."

"Tell me, I conjure you!" cried Margaretta, "who has won your affections."

Ella hid her face upon her shoulder: and, in an almost inarticulate voice, faultered—"YOUR BROTHER!"

To describe the astonishment of Margaretta is impossible: "Unfortunate girl, (she cried, pressing her to her bosom), I must wound you still deeper. Edmund is already married!"

The agitation she had experienced, in revealing her secret had already been too much for her; and Edmund, upon entering at that moment, found her in a convulsive fit. Distracted he hung over her, and in the frenzy of his grief, called her by such tender epithets as too sure declared his real state of mind.

Alarmed and trembling, Margaretta entreated he would desist his attention; and, after much remonstrance, she succeeded

in conveying Ella to her apartment, where she had soon the satisfaction to see her recover. But a very severe illness was the consequence of her conflicting emotions.

During Ella's indisposition, Theodore called daily; and inquired, with the tenderest solicitude, the state of his cousin, the epithet which he was ever accustomed to bestow upon her. Edmund, labouring under secret grief, was no longer himself. Gloomy, sullen, or peevish, he passed his time in unsocial melancholy; nor, till returning health glowed on the cheeks of Ella, did he regain his usual temper.

As soon as Margaretta judged her young friend sufficiently recovered to bear an explanation, she revived the subject; and seizing the first opportunity, gave her the following recital:

"Particular circumstances requiring that all concealment should be now at an end, I must inform you, my dear girl, that Edmund and myself are the only children of the earl of Tyrone, of great power and ample possessions in the north. In early youth, deprived of a tender mother's care, we were solely left to the direction of a father not very affectionate in the discharge of his paternal duties.

"My brother, lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, was doomed to feel the full force of our mutual misfortune. He had unhappily conceived a violent passion for a young girl, daughter to the Earl's steward, and although then but eighteen, was so obstinate in his attachment as to withstand all remonstrance.

"Jessy Duncan was handsome, sprightly, and not quite so illiterate as the common Scottish peasantry, and felt—or at least professed—a violent affection for my brother. The earl discovered the connection, and expressed the strongest disapprobation Lord Edmund, by nature of an impetuous temper, was exasperated to disobedience by his father's menaces, and openly vowed he would marry her in defiance of all opposition. My father treated him with the most cruel severity.

"Rendered desperate by his behaviour, Edmund besought me, in the most piteous manner, to aid his cause. I was imprudently guided by my love for this dear brother, and assented to what he proposed. His fertile imagination soon suggested a plan which was carried into effect. My father's chaplain had ever been lord Edmund's friend, and the absence of the earl, upon a shooting party, afforded a favourable opportunity. Jessy was conducted to the castle, where the ceremony was performed; myself, the chaplain, and lord Edmund's man, being present.

"My father, however, was not to be thus easily duped. He had planted spies so effectually as to have early information of the affair, and burst upon us with all the wrath we merited for our disobedient and clandestine proceedings. Poor Edmund was

baniſhed his paternal roof for ever, unleſs he would conſent to have his marriage annulled. This he poſitively refuſed; and with agony I beheld this beloved brother depart from the caſtle. He informed me he ſhould repair to England.

"Nor did I eſcape unpuniſhed. After Edmund's departure, the earl treated me with increaſed rigour, upbraided me as the abettor of my brother's crime, and commanded me to receive the addreſſes of ſir Walter Herbert (whoſe diſſipated manners, advanced age, and diſguſting perſon, could not but render him my utmoſt abhorrence) upon pain of ſharing the fate of my poor brother.

"I wrote to my brother, and deſired his advice. He entreated me, in the moſt affectionate terms, to accept of his protection, and ſent James on purpoſe to eſcort me, in caſe my father ſhould prove reſolute.

"Great conſideration was requiſite before I could take ſuch a deciſive meaſure. I well knew my father's implacable diſpoſition and hereditary pride to be ſo great, that, if I once voluntarily quitted his protection, he would never take one ſtep to diſcover my retreat; nor ever more ſhould I be conſidered any other than an alien to my family. Yet my unalterable averſion to ſir Walter made me try every endavour to gain my point. I wept, I knelt, and entreated to no purpoſe. The earl ſpurned me from him with rage and contempt, and I quitted his preſence, no longer dubious what ſtep to purſue.

"I accompanied James to London. When arrived at lord Edmund's houſe in Portman-ſquare, I was received with the warmeſt affection by my brother, and preſented to lady Fitzmaurice. No longer the gentle unaſſuming Jeſſy Duncan, ſhe received me with coldneſs almoſt bordering on indifference.

"I ſhould inform you that my brother was independent of the earl, having inherited the fortune of an uncle, which amounted to near two thouſand pounds annually.

"I ſoon ſaw enough to convince me that lord Edmund was not happy. He loved his lady with unabated ardor, but her treatment of him was cruelly inſulting. Raiſed by miſtaken partiality at once from an obſcure ſituation into a ſtate of affluence, and early initiated into the vortex of faſhion; indulged by him in every fancy, her little head turned giddy with the applauſe with which ſhe was received in every circle. Her ſole ſtudy was dreſs and diſſipation, to engage the admiration of the men and the envy of the women. I ſoon, to my infinite mortification, found myſelf conſidered by her as a ſpy placed over her by the vigilant jealouſy of lord Edmund, who vainly endeavoured to attach her to a domeſtic life. She fled his *lectures* (as ſhe termed them) with diſguſt, and haſtened from him to fulfil

engagements contracted without his knowledge or approbation.

"Alas! her giddy career was soon productive of an event which for some time overwhelmed lord Edmund with the most unutterable anguish. At the house of a fashionable friend, lady Fitzmaurice became acquainted with the Count de St. Pierre, a young, gay, and handsome Frenchman; who, with the national gallantry, soon attached himself to the charming *Anglaise*. Public rumour announced the consequences long before my deluded brother could venture to suspect his adored Jessy guilty of imprudence. He was soon crushed beneath the weight of conviction. A discovery was made, shameful and horrible to my brother: a duel followed, and lord Edmund laid his antagonist, as he thought, dead at his feet. He returned home as secretly as possible, hastily penned a few lines to his abandoned wife, and sought me to take leave.

"I entreated to accompany him, willing to share his fate either in prosperity or adversity. Habited in a suit of his cloaths I secured a few valuables; and under cover of night, hastened to Dover. We fortunately procured a speedy passage across the Channel, and proceeded up the country in search of an habitation, when the accident happened which obtained us the humane protection of your father."

Ella sighed deeply when Margaretta had concluded.

It was night when the narative was begun. They were sitting in Ella's apartment; and, owing to the length of the story, the taper was almost burnt out. Ella, endeavouring to raise it in the socket, extinguished it. At that moment the castle bell tolled one: the dull heavy sound seemed to hang upon the air, and trembled through every vaulted avenue. The old and almost forgotten legends of the castle were instantly revived, and Margaretta protested she could not return without a light along the gallery to her own apartment.

"Then take my bed, madam, and I will go," said Ella.

"No, my dear there is no necessity," said Margaretta "we will sleep together."

She had scarce spoken before some one seemed to breathe near. They stood with their hands clasped together in mute affright. A light glimmered for an instant upon the wall in a remote corner of the room: the shadow of a man glided by, and in a moment disappeared: footsteps were promiscuously heard, but seemed lost in distance. Unable to go to bed, or call for assistance, they stood motionless together, nor dared address each other louder than in a whisper, till the rising day over the distant hills revived their sinking spirits. Fearful they surveyed the room by the grey light; when the shadows of the tall cypress trees before the windows, waving in the wind, at

firſt renewed their apprehenſion. Fain would they perſuade themſelves that from thence aroſe their alarm, but that idea ſoon vaniſhed, for it was a different part of the room in which they had ſeen the figure than that where the ſhadows fell.

Cheered a little by the broad dawn of day, Ella accompanied Margaretta to her chamber; where, fatigued both in mind and body, her cares and grief found a temporary relief in ſleep.

Haraſſed by the agitation her ſpirits had undergone the preceding night, Ella plainly betrayed her diſorder in every feature; and, when the family aſſembled at breakfaſt, Edmund obſerved her pallid countenance with undiſſembled concern. His ſiſter, in order to give ſome plauſible reaſon for her young friend's dejection, related the alarm they had met with. Edmund at firſt laughed at their fears, and turned the whole into merriment; until Ella, with a look of gravity he could no longer withſtand, declared it her wiſh to return home. Margaretta, grateful for this conſideration (of which ſhe alone underſtood the real motive), expreſſed her opinion only by a look of approbation. Her brother, much ſurpriſed, remonſtrated ſtrongly againſt it, and proteſted he could not ſuſpect Ella guilty of ſuch weakneſs: he offered his apartment for their uſe, and promiſed that the caſtle ſhould be ſtrictly ſearched that day.

His expoſtulations were to no purpoſe. Ella perſiſted in her reſolution; and, as Margaretta did not oppoſe it, Edmund, either offended at her obſtinacy, or unwilling to make known how much he felt intereſted, declined any farther oppoſition, but ſat ſullenly ſilent the remainder of the morning. After dinner, the apartment of Margaretta was cloſely inſpected; but nothing was found to juſtify their apprehenſions. The other parts of the caſtle were ſearched to as little purpoſe. No one had been ſeen, either inſide or hovering about the caſtle, except their own domeſtics; ſo that, however unwilling to believe their fears the mere effects of fancy, they were obliged to yield to the forced raillery of lord Edmund, who now renewed his ſolicitations for Ella's detention. Nevertheleſs, ſhe reſolutely perſiſted in a refuſal; and Margaretta, willing to put an end to ſo unpleaſing an altercation, declared herſelf ready to accompany Ella to the cottage.

Edmund could not refrain from caſting on her a reproachful look; and, going up to the trembling girl, ſaid, in a voice of ſuppreſſed agitation, "You will favour us with your company ſometimes I hope, Ella, by day-light."

"Certainly," replied ſhe, with averted eyes: "if my apparent childiſhneſs does not render me too contemptible,

it will be conferring the greateſt favour on me to let me ſometimes behold my deareſt benefactreſs."

Edmund then wiſhed her a good morning; and turned away, evidently diſappointed. Ella gladly followed the ſteps of lady Margaretta; fearing to prolong her ſtay, leſt ſhe ſhould become more reluctant to quit the caſtle.

"Believe me, Ella," ſaid Margaretta, as they walked, I am charmed with the propriety of your conduct. I confeſs I trembled for you, and am happy to ſee you ſupport yourſelf with ſo much reſolution."

"My dear madam," replied Ella, "I will endeavour to merit the kindneſs you have ever ſhown me. I have, indeed, for a ſhort time, triumphed over my feelings; but the effort coſt me much. Yet great conſolation ariſes from the reflection that I am but acting conſiſtently with my duty."

They now reached the cottage of la Motte; where the ſlighteſt intimation of Ella's being indiſpoſed was a ſufficient reaſon for her haſty return, the kind Jaqueline bearing too ſtrong an affection for her to permit the attendance of any other on her darling. Nor was the excuſe unfounded; for the diſorder of her mind affected her whole perſon—her pale cheeks, heavy eyes, and enervated limbs, ſtrongly manifeſting approaching illneſs.

Margaretta quitted her with concern; and returned, with a mind heavily oppreſſed, to the caſtle. She found her brother traverſing his chamber with haſty and diſordered ſteps. She tenderly went up to him, and deprecated the anger ſhe ſaw gathering on his brow.

"I ſee," ſaid he, petulantly, "you thought I could not be truſted; but you are miſtaken, and need not be ſurpriſed if your unneceſſary caution ſhould produce the effect you wiſhed it to avert."

Piqued at his unkind reception, ſhe could only reply with tears; when his tenderneſs inſtantly returning for a ſiſter ſo beloved, he entreated her to forgive his harſhneſs, and candidly acknowledged a paſſion for Ella which his reaſon could not but condemn, circumſtanced as he was, however worthy the object

Margaretta warmly exerted herſelf to ſoothe the tumult of his mind, and ſo far ſucceeded as to get from him an aſſurance that he would not again ſeek to behold the object of his unfortunate attachment. They then ſeparated for the night.

The *real* tranſactions of the day had eraſed from the mind of Margaretta the *imaginary* ones of the laſt night, and ſhe repaired to her apartment without the leaſt apprehenſion.

Still busy fancy retraced to her imagination past scenes. She beheld her brother a victim to a guilty passion; or, perhaps, if by Providence the ties which now witheld him should be removed, opposing his bosom to the glistening sword of the amiable Theodore. She shuddered; and conviction of a truth she had never dared to investigate, at once flashed upon her mind. She felt the name of Theodore like an electric shock; and, in idea, beheld him the lover of Ella.

Tormented with these imaginary evils, the bell had tolled three ere she sunk into a slumber, from which she was suddenly awakened by the grasp of a cold heavy hand. Terror denied her the power of articulation; and she felt herself clasped in the arms of a man, who instantly bound a cloth over her mouth, while another tied her hands behind her, and bore her away.

Insensibility would have been happiness to the horror of her situation when, by the light of a torch, she discovered the countenances of her guides. The one who bore her in his arms, was of gigantic stature: every feature was marked with savage ferocity, and his large black eyes scowled beneath a pair of shaggy brows, which almost concealed them. The other, who carried the light, though less terrific, was not less disgusting. His figure was ill formed, his complexion livid, and his whole frame so much emaciated as to give him the most ghastly appearance, to which the loss of one eye greatly contributed; across his forehead was tied a linen bandage, marked with blood; and his lips black and glutinous, when unclosed, discovered the deprivation of almost all his fore teeth, the few which remained being black and putrid. One glance terrified Margaretta, and she again closed her eyes with redoubled horror.

Their journey at length terminated in a spacious cavern; where, upon a raised seat, sat a man of stately deportment in a mask. The wretches unbound their charge, and presented her to their chief; who started back, uttering hideous execrations against the trembling banditti. From what passed, Margaretta found that she was not the person he sought; and awaited in the most dreadful suspense, the decision of her fate.

At length the chief addressed her in a voice imperious but disguised. "Woman! (said he) fear not. Your life is safe, provided you have discretion enough to preserve it. If you comply with our demands you shall be restored to your friends. All we desire is secrecy. Swear by the most solemn oath never to reveal the transactions of this night, and you are safe; but if you presume to discover us, by the Eternal Being, that instant proves the destruction of yourself and all you hold dear."

Margaretta was then compelled to kneel down between her

two guards, each of whom held a piſtol at her ear, while the chief brandiſhed a ſword over her head and adminiſtered to her an oath of the moſt horrid nature. Her lips pronounced the words after him. Her head turned round; and the ſtruggles of nature, too violent to be repreſſed, ſunk her ſenſeleſs, on the earth.

The voices of her hideous conductors ſoon greeted her returning recollection, when the commander thus addreſſed her:

"Diſmiſs theſe idle fears. Be aſſured of your ſafety. We are not ſupernatural beings. You may ſleep ſoundly in your chamber. We ſhall never more diſturb your repoſe; unleſs, by your own perjury, you compel us to heap deſtruction on the inmates of the caſtle."

He then made a ſign; and the men, taking her in their arms, bore her through the damp vaulted paſſage to her own apartment, into which they entered by a trap-door, faſtened ſo exactly that it was ſcarce perceptible when known. The men again aſſured her of her ſafety, and quitted the room by the way they had entered. Exhauſted nature could no longer be deprived of its accuſtomed tributes; and, when the cheering light of the day began to illumine her room, Margaretta ſunk into a profound ſleep.

On the following day lord Edmund called his ſiſter into his ſtudy. His countenance was pale and melancholy, and his tremulous voice could ſcarce give articulation to his words.

"Margaretta," ſaid he, "I have thoughts of returning to London. Are you agreeable to it? You tremble, my dear girl! Be ſeated. I fear I am doomed to involve you in my miſery. It is uſeleſs any longer to affect ſecrecy. I love Ella; but think not I mean to give way to a paſſion as fruitleſs as it is criminal. I will fly this hated place. My antagoniſt is, I learn, quite recovered; nothing, therefore, prevents my immediate return to England, except your inclinations. Say, Margaretta, are you not attached to Theodore la Marche?"

Her bluſhes confirmed him in his ſuſpicion, and he continued:

"Our ſituation is peculiarly delicate. However, I will diſcover the real ſentiments of the chevalier; and, if I find them to be ſuch as I wiſh, believe me, no ſelfiſh concern ſhall ever induce me to deſtroy your happineſs."

Margaretta was prevented making any reply by the entrance of La Marche, who, having a general invitation to

the caſtle, uſually viſited them once a day without reſtraint. In purſuance of his plan, lord Edmund acquainted him of their intended removal. This intelligence had the expected effect. Fearing to loſe the object upon whom he had already fixed his tender affection, he loſt no time in making a full avowal of his paſſion, adding:

"I had hoped to have availed myſelf of this declaration in a more auſpicious moment; but your ſudden intention has removed all poſſibility of delay, and I now throw myſelf intirely upon the mercy of lady Margaretta."

Above all coquettiſh affectation, ſhe inſtantly raiſed him from the ſuppliant poſture he had aſſumed, and aſſured him that the conſent of their parents alone could prevent her from beſtowing upon him the hand he ſolicited: that ſhe had already been too much a witneſs of the evils attendant upon diſobedience, to lay herſelf under any incenſed parent's malediction; concluding with proteſting, that it was her deſign to write a letter to her father, ſubmiſſively reſigning herſelf to his will."

To this Theodore replied, that he was unfortunately denied the power of ſoliciting *his* father's indulgence; the baron being then dangerouſly ill. "But will you," ſaid he, earneſtly addreſſing lord Edmund, "endeavour to defer whatever buſineſs it is that calls you away, until ſuch time as I can obtain a confirmation of my happineſs or miſery?"

Unpleaſant as it was to Edmund to ſtay in a country where he was perpetually reminded of an object too tenderly beloved for his peace, yet he heſitated not to give an immediate aſſent; and Theodore, taking a tender adieu of his affectionate miſtreſs, departed, after promiſſing to meet her again, in the evening, at the cottage.

Margaretta then retired, to write to Lord Dunkeith. In her letter ſhe pathetically implored his forgiveneſs for the raſhneſs of her conduct, informed him of the offers of Theodore, and requeſted his concurrence to a match by which alone her future happineſs could be preſerved or deſtroyed. She then related what had befallen her brother ſince his abſence; and ſtated, in forcible terms, his unhappy ſtate, and his contrition for paſt offences.

When ſhe had finiſhed, ſhe ſhowed it to Edmund, who readily approved of it, and promiſed to incloſe it in one from himſelf. This done, Margaretta felt her mind relieved from a melancholy and oppreſſive load; and repaired with

lively ſpirits to the habitation of La Motte. She found Jaqueline in tears, and Pierre vainly endeavouring to comfort her.

"Ah, madam!" cried ſhe, upon the entrance of Margaretta; "our dear Ella is loſt!—gone, no one knows whither!—and I am a poor miſerable undone creature!"

"Gone!" re-echoed Margaretta. "Heavens! what mean you?—Ella, your daughter, loſt!"

"Ah no, madam!" replied Jaqueline: "ſhe was *not* my daughter; and, what makes it worſe, at this very moment the ſecret of her birth would have been diſcovered, and her beauty and virtue would no longer have remained hid in this obſcurity. The Baron la Marche has juſt ſent for me; and I well know his buſineſs."

Margaretta became almoſt ſtupified with grief and aſtoniſhment. The unconnected volubility precluded all poſſibility of her comprehending the real ſtate of the caſe: which Pierre noticing, ſaid—

"Jaqueline, you bewilder the lady with your imperfect account. If you will be a little tranquil, I will explain all. You muſt know, madam," continued he, "that the Lady Theodoſia did not die in child-bed, as reported. The baron, full of rage, having ordered her into perpetual impriſonment in one of the dungeons of the Caſtle de Montreuil, my wife ſecreted the child; and, to elude the vengeance of the baron, determined to bring it up as her own. The deception paſſed; the baron permitted us to reſide in this cottage; and having intruſted to me the care of Lady Theodoſia, I continued, at ſtated periods, to carry the child to her. The laſt melancholy interview they had was about a week preceding the death of that Lady, when ſhe hung the picture of the marquis her huſband round Ella's neck; who has ever ſince carried it about her, ignorant of the original, or of her who beſtowed the precious gift. The baron is now, we learn, on his death-bed, and has ſent for us (doubtleſs, repentant of his paſt conduct); and Ella might now be reſtored to her rights: but, ſo perverſe is her deſtiny, ſhe has been miſſing an hour, and is no-where to be found. The chevalier has generouſly ſet off in ſearch of her; and on his return reſt all our hopes."

The night now drew on apace, and their anxiety was wound up to a dreadful height. Another meſſage arrived from the baron, an Jaqueline was obliged to attend.

Alarmed at the lateneſs of the hour, Margaretta requeſted Pierre to return with her to the caſtle. When ſhe arrived, ſhe learned, to her inexpreſſible ſurpriſe, that Edmund had been abſent above an hour. Pierre was obliged to go back to learn how all went on, and left Margaretta in a ſtate of the moſt dreadful ſuſpenſe.

At length the horn was ſounded, and the voice of Edmund revived the ſinking heart of Margaretta. Unable to reſtrain her impetuoſity, ſhe ruſhed to the door; and met him bringing in the ſuppoſed-loſt Ella. With an involuntary expreſſion of ſurpriſe and diſpleaſure, Margaretta ſtarted back; and Ella, ſpringing forward, fainted in her arms.

"Take care of her, for heaven's ſake!" cried Lord Edmund. "She has been dreadfully abuſed. I have providentially been the means of ſaving her life."

Margaretta bore her, with the aſſiſtance of Roſa, to her apartment; and directly diſpatched Maurice to Pierre, with the news of her ſafety. As ſoon as ſhe was ſufficiently recovered, Ella, at the requeſt of Margaretta, related the cauſe of her alarming abſence.

"I was," ſaid ſhe, "wandering penſively through the wood, when I heard the voices of men coming near me. In an inſtant ſeveral ruffians ſurrounded me, among whom I diſcovered the perfidious Oda. With a broad grin, he pronounced me his prize; and would have carried me off, had not Lord Edmund, providentially hearing my cries, run to my aſſiſtance. Fate directed him to the ſpot in a propitious moment; when with his ſword he deſperately wounded Oda. The others made off, terrified at the thoughts of approaching death. The villain implored mercy and forgiveneſs; and, on condition of having his pardon, promiſed to reveal a ſecret of importance. He now lies in the wood; and, I believe, Lord Edmund deſigns to let his ſervants bring him hither."

Satisfied at once of all her doubts, Margaretta affectionately embraced her young friend, and imparted to her the ſurprizing diſcovery ſhe had made in her abſence. Ella was no leſs aſtoniſhed than pleaſed at the account, and waited impatiently the reſult of Jaqueline's interview with the baron; yet ſighed to think that, in the preſent unfortunate ſituation of affairs, the acquiſition of birth or fortune would not enſure to her mind future felicity.

Their conference was interrupted by a meſſage from Lord Edmund, deſiring their preſence, that he might inform them

of what had paſſed between himſelf and Oda, who had been brought thither, and ſeemed much better ſince his terrors of approaching death were removed by the free confeſſion of all his guilt. They immediately repaired to the parlour, where Edmund waited them, and from him learned an explanation of the whole myſtery.

Lord Edmund then proceeded to tell them, that Oda had confeſſed they were two of his comrades who had entered through a ſubterraneous paſſage into Lady Margaretta's apartment, and had conveyed her in the dreadful manner before deſcribed, miſtaking her for Ella; Oda himſelf being the chief who had in a maſk interrogated her; the cavern where they reſorted having communication with the lower parts of the caſtle. He alſo confeſſed that he hired a party of deſperadoes, who ſubſiſted by rapine, and that his only motive for entering in the ſervice of Lord Edmund, was the hope of getting Ella ſecurely in his power. The only atonement he could then make being to deliver himſelf and his accomplices up to juſtice: he produced a roll of paper, which he alledged to have found in the cavern, and which proving to be the manuſcript of father Luke, had in all probability been loſt by Theodoſia on her firſt confinement.

This Ella would immediately have inſpected, had not the arrival of a ſervant from the Baron la Marche, deſiring her immediate attendance, prevented it. Unable to proceed to the caſtle, at that hour, alone, Edmund, with Margaretta, inſiſted upon accompanying her. At the gates they were met by Pierre, who conducted Edmund into a parlour, there to wait his ſiſter's return, who went with Ella to the chamber of death.

An awful ſilence prevailed; while Ella, almoſt ſinking with apprehenſion, approached the bed, where lay, in the moſt ſevere agonies, the unhappy baron. By the ſide of the bed ſat Jaqueline, who was applying hartſhorn to his temples; while, with an expreſſion of grief and pity in his countenance, Theodore ſupported his head. At ſome diſtance from the active group ſtood a tall young man with his arms folded, and his brows bent with an air of gloomy diſcontent; whom, from his ſtrong family reſemblance, Margaretta conjectured to be the baron's eldeſt ſon. They ſtarted under a momentary impreſſion of ſurpriſe as their eyes met; but the attention of Lady Margaretta was too forcibly attracted to the dying man, to notice the abruptneſs

with which Frederic turned away from her. As Ella approached, the baron held out his hands, and seemed much agitated. She fell on her knees; and, in that solemn and affecting moment, sincerely forgave him all the injuries he had inflicted on her parents.

"Ah!" cried he; "there needs no further confirmation than her person—the tone of her voice—to convince me it is the daughter of my Theodosia, my much-injured child."

The agony of his soul checked his utterance, and he struggled for some time with inward convulsions; then, being somewhat recovered, he took the cold hand of Ella, pressed it to his clammy lips, and pronouncing faintly the words, "My child, forgive!" expired.

For some moments an awful silence prevailed, which was suddenly interrupted by a tremendous scream from an apartment below. Recollecting the voice, Ella rushed from the room with eager haste; the rest of the party following, in a confused disorderly manner.

Lord Edmund, having loitered for some time about the parlour, found a book, which, to divert the tediousness of the time, he sat down to read, and was deeply engaged in the subject when the door opened, and a female entered; on whom he no sooner cast his eyes than he exclaimed, with frantic horror, "Great God! it is Jessy!"

She screamed, and would have run from his presence; when, seizing her arm, and regarding her with a wildness of frenzy that made her shudder, he cried, "Stay, abandoned wretch, and account to me for your presence here."

Lady Fitzmaurice, terrified at his threatening aspect, screamed loudly for assistance. In a moment Frederic rushed in, with his sword drawn, which he aimed at Edmund's breast.

"Oh, no! no!" she cried, throwing herself between them; "kill him not; he is"—my husband she would have said; but the weapon, intended by the villainous chevalier for him, pierced her bosom, and she fell, weltering in her blood.

Frederic beheld her with a look of desperate malignity. Turning to the company, who were by this time all assembled, he said, while his eyes flamed with fury, "You think you have caught me: you are mistaken. Think not,

Lord Edmund, I will tamely ſubmit to be dragged through the courts of Juſtice for ſuch an accurſed wretch as that. No! no! The chevalier Frederic dares die nobly!"

He then, before any one could prevent him, fell upon the point of his ſword, and inſtantly expired.

"Miſtaken wretch!" ſaid Edmund, as he drew the reeking weapon from his boſom; "this is a dreadful retribution. And you, unhappy woman!" addreſſing Jeſſy, "O employ your few remaining moments in imploring forgiveneſs of that offended Deity, whoſe every law you have violated."

"Edmund," ſaid ſhe, fixing her hollow eyes upon him, "do not embitter this miſerable portion of my exiſtence with your reproaches. Behold here the victim of the avenging hand of Juſtice! Let that ſuffice. I feel it is too late now for the repentance of a life of iniquity, and I muſt ſubmit to my fate. Believe me, the pangs of this moment are more than a retribution for any pleaſurable part of my life; for never, O never, did I enjoy happineſs! That is only the lot of the virtuous; and the guilty wretch not only incurs the torment of a ſtate to come, but daily and hourly yields himſelf a prey to the corroding ſtings of remorſe and ſhame."

She ſpoke with difficulty, her breath grew ſhort, and her glarid eyes reſted upon Edmund. He underſtood its import, and, in a moment, all his former affection recurred to his memory. He flew to ſupport her; and, preſſing her with compaſſionate tenderneſs to his boſom, cried, "Live! live, Jeſſy! and all ſhall be forgiven."

She ſhook her head, and a ghaſtly ſmile played on her features: then, graſping his hand, drew him toward her; and, pointing to the lifeleſs body of Frederic, breathed her laſt in a ſhocking groan.

Theodore, dreading the effects of ſuch a ſcene of carnage, led Margaretta and Ella into the air; and, having committed them to the care of Jaqueline, retired to aſſiſt Edmund in the diſpoſal of the bodies.

When they reached home, Maurice preſented Margaretta with a letter, which ſhe found to be from her father, and which contained an unconditional pardon, and an aſſurance of his willingneſs to receive them with kindneſs, as alſo the object upon which ſhe had fixed her

affections; entreating them to return to him with ſpeed and receive his bleſſing, leſt the cloſe of life ſhould deprive him of the happineſs of again ſeeing and embracing his children.

This was a ſource of great comfort to Margaretta, who now ventured to look forward to proſpects of future felicity hitherto obſcured by almoſt inſurmountable obſtacles. She inſtantly communicated the gladdening news to Ella, who not leſs ſanguine in her expectations, participated in her joy.

Edmund ſoon after joined them; and, no one being willing to converſe with him on the recent melancholy events, they each availing themſelves of their fatigue and inquietude, retired to their ſeparate chambers. The various occurrences of the day occaſioned, however, too much perturbation of mind to enjoy that reſt they otherwiſe ſtood ſo much in need of.

In the morning, Ella opened the packet found by Oda, which contained a certificate of her mother's marriage with the Marquis. The manuſcript, which contained Father Luke's life, ſeemed to have been written at haſty detached intervals, and was in many places almoſt illegible; but its being addreſſed to her mother was a ſufficient motive for her perſevering in the peruſal of it. It ran thus:

"To account for my interference in your affairs, it may, perhaps, be deemed neceſſary to acquaint you with the motives which impelled me to countenance and take an active part in a proceeding that may, in the eyes of the world, be deemed reprehenſible. Hard is the taſk, Theodoſia, to inſpire you with abhorrence of the man who gave you birth: yet ſuch muſt be your ſentiment after the reading of this:

"My parents were of reſpectable family, though not affluent; and at their death I was left, quite a child, to the guardianſhip of the Baron la Marche, who had then a ſon about my own age. We were brought up together with the ſame affection as though we were brothers; and as my parents had left me a handſome independence, I continued to purſue my ſtudies with the young La Marche.

"About that time the Counteſs du Barré came to viſit the Baron, her brother, and brought with her her daughter Antonia. The beauty of the latter could not fail making an impreſſion upon my heart, then warm and

ſuſceptible; which prepoſſeſſion her virtue and gentle temper confirmed, and I flattered myſelf I was not altogether indifferent to her: but, alas! I found all my hopes on that head were vain; for it was ſhortly declared to be the intention of the Baron and herſelf to unite Antonia with young La Marche, whom I had unwarily made my confidant in this affair. With all the ſpecioufneſs, of which he had ſuch great ſhare, he made me the moſt ſolemn promiſe to aſſiſt my ſuit, in preference to his own pretenſions, and that he felt not the leaſt regard for Antonia.

"Not in the leaſt ſuſpecting his duplicity, I conſented to make one in a party of pleaſure, which drew me from the caſtle ſome weeks. At my return a dreadful alteration had taken place. Antonia had been forcibly dragged to the altar, and united to La Marche. Stung with rage, I would have inſtantly made a ſacrifice of him for his perfidy; but even my guardian was decidedly againſt me.

"Not able to endure the dreadful torment of ſeeing Antonia in the arms of another, I quitted Montreuil, leaving Claude, with orders to acquaint me of all their proceedings, and then wandered through the country. At different times I learned from Claude that the baron was very ill, and that Antonia was the mother of a lovely little girl.

"At length the death of my guardian occaſioned me to return, to claim that property which remained in his ſucceſſor's hands. I own I imprudently cheriſhed a hope of ſeeing my Antonia once more; which hope (fatally for her peace!) was gratified. The young Baron received me with much condeſcenſion; and, out of regard to the peace of a woman ſo dear to me, I ſmothered the reſentment that burned within me.

"Paſſing a chamber-door, one morning, which ſtood open, I heard the voice of Antonia, as if in complaint. The Baron being from home, I ventured in, and ſaw the devoted Baroneſs leaning over her infant in an agony of tears. At my entrance, ſhe ſtarted from her ſeat; but at once, overcome with agitation, ſunk again upon the chair. I flew to her. The words "Deareſt Antonia!" eſcaped my lips. She caſt at me a reproachful glance, ſuch a one as I ſhall never forget.

'Clairville!' ſaid ſhe, 'do you deſign to render me ſtill more wretched by your preſence?'

"I dropped on my knees. 'Oh, Antonia! forgive me! I ſtaid but for one interview with you, to tell you, that, miſerable as you may be, there is one yet more ſo, who lived but for you, and now fears not to die for you.'

"She interrupted me—'Why make this confeſſion, as unavailing to you as injurious to me? Oh, Clairville, fly! We muſt never meet again! But, mark me! ſhould the Baron's ill treatment affect my life, as I much apprehend; for my ſake, for that of my infant, lift not your hand againſt the Baron. Be to my Theodoſia a protector, a friend.'

"She fell upon my ſhoulder, and wept bitterly. I claſped her, with the child, to my breaſt, and ſwore never to forſake it.

"At that moment I was ſeized by the ſervant of the Baron; who, with his ſiſter, the Counteſs, entered. I was torn from Antonia, taunted with the moſt opprobious menaces, and thrown into a damp and diſmal dungeon under the caſtle.

"The ſervant who had charge of me was the brother of Claude, and very much attached to me, I having always been his friend in my youth. Under ſuch circumſtances, it may be ſuppoſed I eaſily prevailed upon him to liberate me; and the Baron was impoſed upon with the ſtory of my death.

"I fled to Padua, having firſt learned that the Baron had, in a frenzy of vengeance, ſworn never again to behold his wife, and had immured her within the walls of the convent St. Clare; but found it impoſſible, from the ſtrictneſs of the order, to gain admiſſion.

"Finding all my proſpects thus blaſted, I again turned my thoughts to the profeſſion in which I had been educated, and was admitted of the order of Capuchins then in the monaſtery of St. Egbert, ſeveral of whom uſually confeſſed the ſiſters of St. Clare. It was thus I had it in my power to confer happineſs to my Theodoſia, by introducing her to the Marquis; but was denied the ſatisfaction of revealing myſelf to her. I had ſuffered too much by paternal authority, to divide thoſe whoſe hearts were entwined in the bonds of virtuous affection.

"I retired to the monaſtery; where I found father Michael, who was confeſſor to the lady-abbeſs of St. Clare, at the point of death. He lived but a few hours, and I was choſen to fill his place.

"The abbeſs, being once ſeized with a dangerous illneſs, confeſſed to me a horrid ſecret; which was, that ſhe had engaged with the Baron to poiſon Antonia; who was then dying, owing partly to the torments that had been inflicted on her to induce her to confeſs her criminal attachment, and partly by the impaired ſtate of her conſtitution, occaſioned by the anguiſh of her mind. I was ſo much ſhocked as to be upon the point of diſcovering myſelf by my emotion; but, recollecting how much was at ſtake, I concealed my feelings, and heard the remainder of her confeſſion, which was very minute. I enjoined her a ſevere penance, and compelled her to abandon her intentions. Alas! my zeal was of little ſervice; for I had ſhortly after the agony of being obliged to read the funeral ſervice over my loved Antonia. From that time I devoted myſelf to the moſt auſtere life. You, dear Theodoſia, know all the reſt * * * *."

It was with great difficulty that Ella had made out ſo much; ſhe then returned it to her pocket, almoſt blinded by her tears. The entrance of lord Edmund, however, ſoon diſpelled them. After making her the warmeſt profeſſions of regard, he acquainted her that it was their intention to return to Dunkeith, as it was ſo much his lordſhip's deſire to receive and pardon them; after which he hoped he ſhould receive from her an anſwer favourable to thoſe wiſhes which he was now at liberty to encourage and avow.

Ella referred him to the deciſion of lady Margaretta; declaring, that when ſhe favoured the ſuit of her uncle, ſhe would not heſitate to grant equal indulgence to his petition; meaning to employ the interval of their abſence in writing information of what had paſſed to Father Luke, whoſe letters ſhe ſhowed him, not willing at that time to aggravate the diſtreſs of Baron Theodore.

The next object of their concern was Oda, who being recovered from his wounds, bound himſelf by the moſt ſolemn vows to quit the country; the reſt of his companions being totally diſperſed by the Officers of the Police.

Father Luke ſoon wrote a congratulatory anſwer; and as Lord Edmund had received the immediate conſent of his father, he loſt no time in his journey, expediting as much as poſſible his return to Montreuil; where he claimed, as the reward for his expedition, the hand of Ella—no longer the obſcure humble La Motte, but the heireſs to

immenſe fortune, (all her property being refunded by Theodore), and poſſeſſor of as much virtue as beauty. Jaqueline and Pierre was taken into their ſervice, and are grown grey in the family. Lady Margaretta enjoys equal happineſs in her union with Theodore, whoſe generoſity and goodneſs are the admiration of the country. And thus, by the inſcrutible decrees of Providence, once more has happineſs reſided the reſpective poſſeſſors of the TWO CASTLES.